

Sept 10th 38

Discussion

The following notes by Mr.
Badley (Headmaster of Bedales)
form part of a considerable
discussion on the subject
of the P.N.S.U. Manifesto.

They were read on Wednesday
evening by Mr. Franklin
with Miss Mason's answers

The following notes form part of the correspondence on the subject of the P.M.U. Manifesto
by Mr. Bailey (Headmaster of Medford)
10/2/30

Section 1. I wish that some fuller definition had been added of what is meant by knowledge, as used by Miss Mason throughout the pamphlet, - the more so, for "the man in the street" it usually means information: and though in Section 10 it is expressly pointed out that "information is not education." Anyone who had read so far under the impression that knowledge meant information, would have got an entirely wrong impression of the writer's meaning. I could wish, therefore, that at the outset it had been clearly stated that knowledge meant something very different from information.

In Section 4 it is said that the getting of knowledge, and the getting of delight in it are the ends of a child's education." This partly does what I mean, by including in knowledge the element of delight in it. But even that is hardly large enough. We do not know anything until we have made it completely our own, and can use it. Real knowledge implies power, and the definition of it should therefore include both pleasure in its attainment and pleasure in its use. It is, of course, in the sense of information that, as Miss Mason says in Section 4, "educational theorists systematically depreciate knowledge," - and rightly. But if we once admit that there can be no real knowledge without use and without delight, then all that she says holds good. But in that case, the statement in Section 1, that "the principle which keeps our great Public Schools perennially alive is that they

X "live upon books," comes as a shock to those who are accustomed to see in this precisely their weak point. For the reason that the knowledge aimed at in the Public School by the use of books is too often mere information, with little use made of it, and less delight in it. It is true that "the best Public School boy is a fine product":- he has had the capacity to get something in the end out of the books he has used, and as they are amongst the finest books in the world, he could hardly fail to get something good from them. But it has been in spite of, and not because of, the hideous waste of energy in his earlier training: and at best, he has less power, and a narrower outlook, than would have been the case not only if he had been trained by other means than books alone, but if the books themselves had been rightly used in the earlier stages. Of course I know that with all this Miss Mason is really in agreement. But I think the wording of the first section is unfortunate, as it might easily convey an entirely opposite impression. The real remedy is the one she suggests, that, as preparation even for the proper use of books at the Public School, there is need of a wide curriculum, including both things and books, (and, - as I should say, - things even more than books), up to the age of 14, as she says (or of 15, as I would rather say,) when a narrower and more concentrated course of study may well begin. In fact, I think that the whole subject would be made clearer if one began by insisting on the need of two stages of School training:- one, the wide

general course up to about fifteen; and after this age a more specialised course, in which the requirements of the later career ought to be considered. For example, all that she says in Section 16 is perfectly true, if we are thinking only of the earlier stage; but by no means true of the later. And though she has throughout confined her attention to the earlier stage, it would be well, I think, to make the point clear at the outset, or a careless reader might suppose that ^{she meant that} there was to be no place in education for the requirements of the ^{special} training for the calling in life, and so dismiss it all as "unpractical."

X It is ^{certainly} most necessary to protest, as she does in Section 3, against early specialisation, and selecting some subjects to the exclusion of others, instead of ^{first} letting a boy's interests have free play, and ^{so discovering} ~~then later follow~~ the lines of natural aptitude ^{to follow later.}

~~as associated with both, - play a large part in nature study on the one hand, and in history on the other. But as explanation, as she says, can be made quite ridiculous and wearing.~~

In reading Section 17, I am inclined to stand up for oral teaching, and to plead that it has its use. In many cases, I am sure that a child is unable to get much real good out of a book, unless he comes to it with some interest in its contents already in his mind, and some knowledge too, to which to attach what the book tells him. A previous oral lesson gives an opportunity for awaking such interest, and arousing the child's own questions on the subject, to which answers will afterwards be found in the book. Again, I do not doubt that Miss Mason is agreed with this, but her statement, as it stands, seems to me too sweeping, and likely rather to puzzle the teacher.

Section 14, on the use of books, seems to me in every way admirable, and I hope that it may come into the hands of very many teachers, as it shows how real books may be turned to most account. There is, however, I think, a need to point out a danger in the use of books, upon which Miss Mason has not touched, and of which, indeed, she hardly seems to me sufficiently conscious. I mean the danger of using books to supply information at second hand in a case where, if our object is real knowledge, it ought to come by actual observation and experience. This seems to me to be

exemplified in some specimens quoted in the Appendix:- as, for instance, in the account of bees, derived from "The Dairy Land of Science." Surely this would have been ten times as valuable if it represented what the child had actually noticed. And so with other examples given on page 30, which seem to me I must confess, to show the wrong use of books.

X In the same way, at the end of Section 17 I should like to protest against the statement that "the young shall learn what life is from the living books of those who know." We can only learn what life is by living it; and no course of books can supply the place, for a child, of a life with much freedom and much activity. And this is why I say that in this earlier stage acquaintance with things is even more necessary than acquaintance with books. Books can arouse, better, perhaps, than anything else, intellectual interests, and are necessary to give food for those finer feelings which are in part intellectual. But for the development of true mental power, as well as manual skill and practical interests, the training of contact with things is absolutely necessary; and in dwelling on the use and the need of books, one must not allow it to be supposed that too much is claimed for them.

These other needs are all allowed for in the summary given in the second Appendix; but even there I cannot help thinking that a little too much is expected in the way of book-work. Your experience must be very different from ours, if you find that more than one modern language can be

learnt with advantage, as well as Latin, at this stage.

I hope the above notes do not seem hypercritical, but it is just because I am so heartily in sympathy with almost all that Miss Mason urges, and because I feel that it needs to be brought strongly home to all parents and teachers, that I would wish it to be free from any appearance of one-sidedness, and from any possibility of misunderstanding.

To these notes the following answers by
Miss C.H. Plam

16 p 80 Nov 301

I am very much gratified by Mr
Courtous.
Bad lips helps & always criticism.
I shall take up the points he makes in order.

~~Section I~~ The distinction between Knowledge information
Section 1) is, I think, fundamental. Information
is the record of facts, experiences, ap-
pearances & whether in books or in the
verbal memory of the individual.

Knowledge & sense tone implies the
result of the
voluntary & dispassionate action of the mind
upon the material presented to it.
Great minds & Darwin or a Plato are
able to deal at first hand with
appearances or experiences, the
ordinary mind gets stuck up its
sums up by such direct dealing
but for the most part it is set in
action by the meanings of knowledge

of others which is at the same time a stimulus & a point of departure. The information acquired in the course of application is only by chance & has others of practical value. Knowledge on the other hand, that is the product of the vital action of the mind on the material presented to it, is power as it implies an increase of intellectual aptitudes in new directions & is always new point of departure.

Perhaps the chief function of a teacher is to distinguish information from knowledge in the acquisition of his pupils. Because knowledge is power, the child who has got knowledge will certainly show

power in dealing with it. He will
 read, condense, illustrate or
 narrate with freedom and with
 freedom in the arrangement
 of his words. The child who has
 got only information will write
 or speak in the stereotyped
 phrases of his textbook or will
 make in his notes the words
 of his teachers. (This is why I have said
 that information is not education.)
 I am entirely in agreement with
 Mr. Badley, until we come to the
 sentence "it is of course in the
 sense of information" that I re-
 tract myself. I instinctively
 depreciate knowledge rightly.
 This is not quite my view.

X
 II

(Section 4)

It is the educational theorists are
 inclined to attach more importance
 to the working of the intellectual
 machinery than to the output of
 the product; that is they feel it more
 important that a child should think
 than that he should know. My
 contention is rather that he
 cannot know without having
thought, & also that he cannot
 think without an abundant
 varied regular supply of the
 material of knowledge. We all
 know how the mass of apriori
 stimuli in us thought, inquiry
 inference etc. for us in the end
 some added knowledge.

III "The principle that keeps no great

public schools alive is that they live upon books. Mr Badly explains this fully when he says that the books that the best public school boys have used "are among the finest books in the world".

I do not think that this fact explains why the great public schools do not die but are "permanently alive". But I do not use "alive" to mean living, vital, energetic & I have spoken of their present failure to do anything for the average & the dull boy. This failure is not an analogous fact that their training depends on "books alone".

X I am glad to be in agreement with Mr Badly in thinking that the

equally as partly in the preparation
 partly in the wide curriculum,
 including both Things & Books.
 I should however be inclined
 to give equal value to Things &
Books. I have not made "Things"
 prominent in our Manifesto for
 2 reasons. First 1st place that
 side of education is occupying
 public attention almost exclusively
 just now. Second 2nd place the P.E.C.
 has come before the public as
 advocating Education by Things
 rather than by Books though
 perhaps as a matter of fact
 both sides have had equal
 attention. I think the danger is
 giving too prominent a place

Education by itself has in a
certain want of atmosphere in
the deplorable absence of a
standard of comparison of
the principle of veneration. We
in the people seem to be the
note of an Education which
is not largely sustained by
books as well as by things

X
No V
Section 4
200

I strongly agree that it would be
better to carry on the liberal
Education than in view of
the age of 15 rather than 14
Also I should join in moving on
the need of two stages of
Board training, but whether to
experiments for the liberal
training for the College in life

could be considered in the second
stage or in a third stage to begin
at a still later age, should I think
depend on the means & position
of the pupils

VI.
Section 17.

Assuredly oral teaching has its
uses; indeed I think those uses
were dwelt upon in the first
writing of the pamphlet under
discussion. We cannot do without
the oral lesson, to introduce to
illustrate, to amplify to sum up.
My supposition is that oral lessons
should be the work of angels,
rather the child who has to walk
through life that finds his
intellectual food in books or
so without, shall not be free to

116
Section 16

top upon ourselves. This our
experience is, as I have tried to
show, that children take to
books with surprising readiness.
I am glad of the opportunity afforded
to me to speak of the use of books
in the very wide field which for
convenience, we call Science.
I entirely agree that here knowledge
should come "by actual observation
& experience", as in the case of the
children who wrote about
spiders, Thrushes, Twigs. At the
same time books have two
uses in this field of knowledge.
Reference books are of value to
children when they wish to verify
or account for what they know.

Sept 17 cm 22

observed while another class of
 boats, those of Professor Lloyd Morgan
 Thompson, grades 12, give inspiration
 & a point of departure to the
 student in search of knowledge.
 The answer about bees is perhaps
 accurate in point. The child mixes
 what she has seen with what she
 has read; She could not have
 obtained all her knowledge from
 observation. We are very sure
 she will miss no opportunity
 of watching the ways of bees
 henceforth. I venture to believe
 this because the whole is told
 with the verve & vividness
 which indicates real knowledge.
 I think the remarks apply to

the three answers on page 30
 The child has evidently seen &
 realized the dispersion of seeds,
 though her attention may have been
 first called to the matter by
 Mrs. Bristow's book. In the
 answers on a piece of "rhubarb"
 & on the "egg" I should think a piece
 of rhubarb & a microscope can
 be found the butcher had been
 used to judge by the vivid im-
 pressions the writer would
 have received. If the teacher
 in these cases depended solely
 on books, it was no doubt
 defective & wrong in principle.
 I am not sure that we can only
 know what life is by living it.

X
 Nov 1881
 Edison 17.

Facts, none like the rest have been as
 much help in interpreting "life" but
 I truly agree that no corner of
 books can supply the place for a
 child of "much freedom &
 much activity". I have written so
 much from time to time on the
 importance of these that I thought
 might venture to speak on this
 occasion only of the use of Books
 in Education, but I am grateful
 for a reminder of the grave
 danger of allowing it to be
 supposed that too much is claimed
 for them. What is not secured
 here does the title of the pamphlet
 as it all recent studies leave
 me open to grave misapprehensions

The original title was Racoon's Phonics
 which seems for delight to someone
 in the lesson in which he uses the
 word racoon the subject of the
 pamphlet - written merely to
 bring to the front a side of
 education which runs some
 chance of being overlooked
 The teaching of language is on
 the basis of all our teaching.
 We wish to set an example
 before children, especially
 in the matter of the hearing
 pronouncing of foreign
 words. Let

Let me again say how much
 I value Mr. Boddy's sympathy
 manifested in his careful &
 thorough criticisms.